

# SPIRITUAL INSOMNIA

Last week we discussed the concept of "spiritual amnesia", with the focus being on a tendency to act as if we've forgotten God's word and will for us, when in reality we're choosing to ignore it. Today, we'll talk about "spiritual insomnia" - things that can keep us up at night! Spiritual conversations we have with ourselves through the day and even night.

There are many of them and they can change as life goes one. For example, I had a brother tell me during the week, "Enjoy your kids. Little kids have little problems, big kids have big problems." A set of parents are both acquainted with long discussions at night, but the obstacles or goals under discussion may be different.

What about you? What seems to keep you up these days? Let me say, this doesn't have to be all bad. Sometimes it's just the realities of life. However, we're probably thinking about worse case scenario. Yes, there are times when sin and its consequences can keep us up at night, and rightly so. I'll briefly offer a couple of passages, but then I'd like to move on from that given our discussion last week.

## The Bad

- On a national scale: **Deuteronomy 28:65-67** "And among these nations you shall find no respite, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot, but the Lord will give you there a trembling heart and failing eyes and a languishing soul. Your life shall hang in doubt before you. Night and day you shall be in dread and have no assurance of your life. In the morning you shall say, 'If only it were evening!' and at evening you shall say, 'If only it were morning!' because of the dread that your heart shall feel, and the sights that your eyes shall see."
- On a personal scale: **Psalm 32:3-4** "For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer."
- Remember that such feelings are meant to move us, not away from Jesus, but towards Him:
  - **Mark 10:20-22** And he said to Him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.
  - **2 Corinthians 7:10** For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.
- Remember also, that once we repent, we should learn from it and then move on.
  - **2 Corinthians 7:11** For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.
  - **2 Corinthians 2:5-11** Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure - not to put it too severely - to all of you. For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. Anyone whom

you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

- If we are to forgive each other in such a way, how much more does the Lord forgive you?

### The Realistic

- **2 Corinthians 11:21b-29** But whatever anyone else dares to boast of - I am speaking as a fool - I also dare to boast of that. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one - I am talking like a madman - with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?
- But what about passages like **Matthew 6:25-34**? Well, it seems to me, by a harmonizing of passages, that we're talking about the difference of not trusting in God vs. going through difficult times that are, but nature, stressful. Ever been stressed by something while also trusting in God? Can that stress go too far? I think so . . . it can lead to a lack of trust in God. But, what else are you to do with Paul's comment? You can either hold the position that he was wrong (perhaps so), or you can level with one another and say, "Yeah, I get it. They're both true." You think followers of God were ever a little stressed when they were tortured, mocked, flogged, imprisoned, sawn in two, killed with the sword, going about in the skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted and mistreated? Yeah, that's stated in the Bible! See **Hebrews 11:35-38**. Yet, the Hebrew writer wouldn't rebuke them. You can read about heroes in faith that had questions and stresses. No, such people, the Hebrew writer said, were treated poorly by the world "by whom the world was not worthy."
- We can talk about God's word in such a clinical way - like a lab experiment where you can control everything, but that's not real life. The main principle is to not give up. Keep going and continue to entrust yourself to the Lord.

### The Good

- **Psalm 63:1-8** "O God, You are my God; earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh faints for You, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon You in the sanctuary, beholding Your power and glory. Because Your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise You. So I will bless You as long as I live; in Your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise You with joyful lips, when I remember You upon my bed, and meditate on You in the watches of the night; for You have been my help, and in the shadow of Your wings I will sing for joy. My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me."
- He's on the mind because we remember who He is and what He's done for us.

- **Psalm 143:5** I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that You have done; I ponder the work of Your hands.
- He's on the mind because we're thinking of His word and promises.
  - **Psalm 119:48** I will lift up my hands toward Your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on Your statutes.
  - **Psalm 119:148** My eyes are awake before the watches of the night, that I may meditate on Your promise.
- He's on our mind because we're talking to Him because our soul clings to Him.
  - Not gonna lie. That last one got me laughing because I thought about how much Ainsley is attached to Jordan. She'd given her a breather, but she's back at it again. At the same time - it's such a beautiful picture. How a child needs their mother. A child who follows in the shadow of their father - always right there with him. It's that beautiful image you get with Ruth clinging to Naomi. It's an intimate relationship, like when Adam held fast to his wife and became one with her.
  - Jesus did this a lot.
    - **Mark 1:35** And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He departed and went out to a desolate place, and there He prayed.
      - (People have a hard enough time getting up early to work out. Wonder if we could get each other up to pray! Of course, I'm being light hearted, but isn't it beautiful?)
    - **Luke 5:15-16** But now even more the report about Him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear Him and to be healed of their infirmities. But He would withdraw to desolate places and pray.
    - **Luke 6:12-13** In these days He went out to the mountain to pray, and all night He continued in prayer to God. And when day came, He called His disciples and chose from them twelve, whom He named apostles:
    - **Matthew 14:22-23** Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowds. And after He had dismissed the crowds, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone,
  - **What was Jesus praying for? Sometimes God has us up early and keeps us up late for the most beautiful reasons.** They can be the most wonderful moments you've ever had. I dare say I've felt closest to God in prayer, yet it's the one I've also struggled with. Isn't that interesting? However, it's when we talk to Him about what's going on. We pray to God about life, because our lives ultimately center around Him.
    - You ever pray for your loved ones? You ever stay up thinking about your personal goals to become more like Jesus, pray for your family and talk about what's going on. Pray for the strength of others: your spiritual family, loved one, children, friends, coworkers, etc.? I know that sometimes this can cross over into the "realistic category", but it doesn't always need/have to. We pray for strength and spiritual growth - for ourselves and our loved ones.